

Affect Theory

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PS218
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Bunche 2174

This course offers students an occasion to engage recent work in affect theory. Two guiding themes in our investigations and readings will be that theories of affect are (1.) a radicalization of modern moral sentimental theories of sociality (think David Hume on associationism, Adam Smith on sympathy, and Jane Austen on agreeableness); and (2.) a response to the hermeneutic turn in literary and political analysis. Thus, an important site of consideration will be the contributions that theories of affect make to issues of political equality, solidarity, mediation, and language.

The first half of the course is dedicated to selected writings of Gilles Deleuze and Gilbert Simondon, to Simondon's influence on Deleuze's account of assemblages (*agencement*), and to the latter's unique articulation of a process theory of difference and repetition. The idea here is that Deleuze on repetition and Simondon on disparation offer the ontological grounds for affect theory.

The second half of the course is dedicated to the exploration of diverse writers in/around affect theory and their critics – all of whom, in direct or indirect ways, take up some of the ideas articulated and explored in the first half of the course. Important to this second half of the course will be the function of political and aesthetic judgment to affect theory.

The course is intended for any graduate student in any department at any level of study interested in research on affect theory. Students wishing to audit this class are welcome to do so.

Assignments:

1. Each student taking this class for credit is required to prepare 2 in-class presentations from a week's readings (maximum 1500 words). = 2 x 20% of final grade.
2. Each student taking this class for credit is required to write a final paper which can be either an original research essay on a topic of their choice or a literature review of affect theory research not covered in class and relevant to their own research interests (maximum 8000 words). 1 x 60% of final grade.

NB: Some awareness of the following works is advised:

Aristotle: Poetics & Metaphysics (Book VII)

Benedict de Spinoza: Ethics

Hume: A Treatise of Human Nature (especially the famous Personal Identity discussion)

Adam Smith: The Theory of Moral Sentiments

Kant: Critique of Judgment

Hegel: Phenomenology of Spirit

Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra & Gay Science (i.e., on the eternal return)

H. Bergson: Matter and Memory

William James: Essays in Radical Empiricism & Principles of Psychology

Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Phenomenology of Perception

Affect Theory: Weekly Reading Assignments

Week 1.

Patricia Clough, "The Affective Turn" in Affect Theory Reader

Rita Felski: "*Context Stinks!*" from The Limits of Critique

G. Deleuze: Dialogues 2: "Anglo-American Literature"

Week 2.

Gilbert Simondon – "The Position of the Problem of Ontogenesis" (*parresia* 7:2009, 4-16)

Gilles Deleuze: "On Gilbert Simondon" (from G. Deleuze: Desert Islands)

Alberto Toscano: Chapter 5: "*Tertium Datur?*" Gilbert Simondon's Relational Ontology" from Theater of Production.

Neal Thomas: "Choice or Disparation? Theorising the Social in Social Media Systems"

(<http://www.westminsterpapers.org/articles/10.16997/wpcc.211/>)

Recommended:

Muriel Combes: Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual (*passim.*, but especially "The Transindividual Relation")

Aristotle. Metaphysics, Book VII.

Andrea Bardin: Epistemology and Political Philosophy in Gilbert Simondon

A Short List of Gilbert Simondon's Vocabulary:

<https://fractalontology.wordpress.com/2007/11/28/a-short-list-of-gilbert-simondons-vocabulary/>

Week 3. **[NO CLASS BUT READ:]**

G. Deleuze: Difference and Repetition, Intro & Chapter 1

Recommended: Dan Smith, Essays on Deleuze: Chapter 6 "Aesthetics: Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality;" and Chapter 10 "Politics: Flow, Code, and Stock: A Note on Deleuze's Political Philosophy"

Week 4.

G. Deleuze: Difference and Repetition, Ch. 2 & 3

Recommended: C. Boundas. "Deleuze, Empiricism, and the Struggle for Subjectivity."

Translator's Introduction to Gilles Deleuze's Empiricism and Subjectivity.

Gilles Deleuze, Dialogues 2: Preface, Many Politics

Week 5.

G. Deleuze and F. Guattari: 1000 Plateaus. "Intro: Rhizome;" Micro-politics and Segmentary;" "Becoming Animal"

Recommended: Manuel Lima: Visual Complexity, Chapters 1 & 2.

Week 6.

Brian Massumi: "The Autonomy of Affect" from Parables for the Virtual

Brian Massumi: The Politics of Affect, Chapters 1-3

Brian Massumi: OntoPower "The Primacy of Preemption" (also available in *Theory & Event*, 10:2, 2007)

Week 7. **[NO CLASS BUT READ:]**

Lauren Berlant: Cruel Optimism, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2

Week 8.

William E. Connolly: "The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine" (in *Political Theory* 33:6, 869-886).

William E. Connolly: Neuropolitics, Ch. 1-3

Recommended:

William E. Connolly: "Intro: The Pluralist Imagination" in The Ethos of Pluralization
"Agonism, Pluralism, & Contemporary Capitalism: An Interview with W. E. Connolly" in *Contemporary Political Theory*, 2008:8 (200-219)

Week 9.

Ruth Leys: "The Turn to Affect: A Critique" in *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 2011, 434-472)

F. Callard & C. Papoulias: "Biology's Gift: Interrogating the Turn to Affect" in *Body & Society* (March 2010, 16: 29-56).

L. Zerilli: "The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment" in *New Literary History* (46:2 Spring, 2015, 261-286).

S. Krause: "Non-Sovereign Agency" in Freedom Beyond Sovereignty.

Recommended:

C. Parnet: Deleuze's Abecedaire: K is for Kant; W is for Wittgenstein (video)

Deleuze: "To be done with Judgment" in Essays: Critical & Clinical

Wimsatt & Beardsley, The Verbal Icon: "Introduction," "The Intentional Fallacy," "The Affective Fallacy"

Week 10.

Collective decision on any of the works listed below.

Required Texts:

1. 9780231141352 – Deleuze: Dialogues 2
2. 9780816614028 – Deleuze: A Thousand Plateaus
3. 9780231081597 – Deleuze: Difference & Repetition
4. 9780822328971 – Massumi: Parables for the Virtual
5. 9780822351115 – Berlant: Cruel Optimism
6. 9780816640225 – Connolly: Neuropolitics
7. 9780745689821 – Massumi: Politics of Affect

Recommended:

1. 9780822359951 – Massumi: Ontopower
2. 9780231068130 – Deleuze: Empiricism & Subjectivity
3. 9781616892197 – Lime: Visual Complexity
4. 9780226234694 – Krause: Freedom Beyond Sovereignty
5. 9780262018180 – Combes: Gilbert Simondon and the Philosophy of the Transindividual
6. 9780748643325 – Smith: Essays on Deleuze

Books I would have liked to include but couldn't due to space and time:

G. Deleuze: Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation
M. Merleau-Ponty: The Visible and the Invisible & “Cezanne’s Doubt”
Nigel Thrift: Non-Representational Theory
Lisa Blackman: Immaterial Bodies
Lars Tonder: Tolerance
R. Grusin: Premediation
E. Brinkema: The Forms of the Affects
A. Cvetovich: An Archive of Feelings
D. Panagia: The Political Life of Sensation
C. Altieri: The Particularities of Rapture: An Aesthetics of Affect
S. Ahmed: Queer Phenomenology
K. Stewart: Ordinary Affects
B. Massumi: Politics of Affect (Interviews)
E. K. Sedgwick: Touching Feeling
Sianne Ngai: Ugly Feelings
J. Butler: Senses of the Subject
Jasbir Puar: Terrorist Assemblages
John Protevi: Political Affect
Alexander G. Weheliye: Habeas Viscus
Rei Terada, Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the “Death of the Subject”
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky; Frank, Adam, eds. Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader
E. Anker: Orgies of Feeling
D. Heller-Roazen: The Inner Touch: Archeology of a Sensation
Richard Grusin, ed.: The Nonhuman Turn
James Chandler: An Archeology of Sympathy
Mel Chen: Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect

A very limited selection of books on/about Deleuze I encourage you to explore:

C. Boundas: The Intensive Reduction

Michael Hardt: Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy

Claire Colebrook: Gilles Deleuze

Brian Massumi: A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia

Nathan Widder: Political Theory After Deleuze

Nicholas Tampio: Deleuze's Political Vision

Paul Patton: Deleuze and the Political

Dan Smith: Essays on Deleuze

Ronald Bogue: Deleuze on Cinema & Deleuze on Literature & Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts

Eleanor Kauffman: Deleuze and the Dark Precursor & Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture

Felicty Coleman: Deleuze and Cinema

Manuel Delanda: A New Philosophy of Society

Eugene Holland: Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis & Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus: A Reader's Guide

G. Flaxman (ed.) The Brain is the Screen

G. Rodowick: Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine & The Virtual Life of Cinema

Gordon C.F. Bearn: Life Drawing: A Deleuzian Aesthetics of Existence

Poala Marrati: Gilles Deleuze: Cinema and Philosophy

C. Boundas, ed., Deleuze and Philosophy

Peter Hallward: Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation